

# That Card of John P. Robbins Jr.

That card is evidently hurting the Republican party in North Carolina, and especially in Watauga and the adjoining counties. This is shown by the searching and persistent manner in which they have attacked his motives and tried to break down his character. It is but justice to him to add that the signal failure of these attacks has established his good character on a firm foundation. But it is not John P. Robbins Jr., but the truth of the card that is hurting that party. And when they are making such strenuous efforts to destroy the force of the card, and could so effectually do it by showing that the card is not true, the fact that in the long drawn out controversy about it there has not appeared a single denial of the truth of the card, or of any part of it, amounts to an admission that it tells the truth.

Now the truth is of divine origin, and is so heavenly in its innocence that though naked, it is not ashamed. It is so essentially pure and incapable of contamination that though spoken by the foulest tongue at the instigation of the blackest heart, its divinely given purity receives no detriment thereby, and the radiant truth still comes forth to the light that it loves, as pure and as stainless as ever. It follows that if the republicans could show that J. P. Robbins Jr., is a bad man, it would be a vain reply to the truth of this card. It would be an illogical reply, and it is shocking to think that the *Enterprise* would attempt an illogical reply, for the *Enterprise*, when it speaks editorially, is learned, grave and serious, and is nothing if not logical.

J. P. Robbins Jr. is one of the numerous sons of a poor man with a large family. By his own manly struggle with the disadvantages of poverty and the out-of-the-way location of his wild mountain home, he is fighting his way to a good education and a higher position in life, and without having lost his skill in farm work, or his love of a farmer's life, he has acquired education enough to be a first class common school teacher, whose services are in ready demand, and sufficient business training and experience to be a popular and successful country merchant. Growing up surrounded by republicans, and not making a study of politics, he became a republican from association and the unthinking pliancy of childhood. Being in a county in which there were very few colored people, and in which the white republicans had for a number of years held the majority in the county, and could poll a respectable vote, and even when the Democrats were divided by discords among themselves, could still sometimes carry the county, he had seen nothing of negro domination in the republican party in North Carolina. And if he had sometimes heard its existence charged, he accepted the explanation, then, as now, given by prominent republicans, that it was a democratic invention gotten up to influence white voters on the approach of an election. But when he went to Raleigh as an alternate delegate to the state convention of the

republican party, what to him was a very startling revelation met his eyes and ears. When he looked over the floor of the large assemblage he saw that some four-fifths of the delegates were colored people. When he cast his eyes upwards at the capacious galleries that surrounded them, and were crowded with spectators, and saw the sea of faces that looked down upon them, he saw that it was a black sea, or black and yellow sea, with scarcely a white face showing on its many shaded surface. When he listened to the proceedings of the often tumultuous body, he observed that the colored delegates could, and at times did control the convention, and could, and at times did, control the nominations made by it.

He saw that the color line had been drawn in North Carolina; and without stopping to consider by whom, or for what it had been drawn, or whether it ought to have been drawn, or could still be obliterated, he saw and felt that he was on the wrong side of it. And with an instinctive self respect and love of his own race, and a knowledge that in North Carolina it is the superior race, in number, in intelligence, in capacity for self government and in practical wisdom in political affairs, he hastened to ally himself to his own white race, in the ranks of the democratic party, where so large a majority of it is to be found.

Having thus become a democrat while attending as a delegate the republican state convention, he thought it becoming on his return to Watauga to explain to those who sent him to represent them the reason of his change and as a convenient means of doing so he wrote and published that card, in which in plain English he told them in effect that it was because of the fact, unknown to him till he saw and heard the convention, that a large majority of the republican party in North Carolina were of the colored race; and that that race, as shown by its representative men in the convention, was evidently far less capable of doing either the state government or the county governments in North Carolina than the white race, of which the democratic party in North Carolina is almost entirely composed.

But John P. Robbins Jr. did a much greater thing than he was aware of when he wrote and published that card. On the day that he committed it to the press he went to bed at night, the modest, quiet, studious country school master and country merchant that he is. "He awoke in the morning and found himself famous." His name was flying over the length and breadth of the state as fast as steam could carry it, spreading as it went from paper to paper, and resounding from mouth to mouth.

Why was it that the name of John P. Robbins Jr. became so suddenly known all over the state? It was because with a strong and fearless and well-timed blow, he had boldly struck one of the two great key-notes of the pending campaign in North Carolina. For besides the great national issue of tariff reform, in which, as an almost entirely agricultural

state, she has so vital an interest, we have in North Carolina this issue of race supremacy which so unexpectedly presented its hideous front to John P. Robbins Jr., and through the writer apprehends no danger that the colored people in North Carolina can ever take away from the white people the control of the state government, the abolition at this time of the present system of county government, and a return now to the Canby system, as advocated by the republican party, would throw the county governments in many of the counties in the eastern and perhaps middle part of the state into the now incompetent hands of the colored people of those counties. This would bring directly on those counties, and indirectly on the rest of the state evils far greater than all the present evils of federal legislation which it is the policy and purpose of the democratic party to abolish and reform.

It was his quick perception, when it presented itself to him, of the vital importance in North Carolina of this issue of race supremacy, and his prompt and clear and opportune presentation of it in his card, that has made the name of John P. Robbins Jr. a well known name throughout the state. It is not probable that so young a man can be aware, without some degree of gratification, if so sudden an exaltation of his fame. But he has not escaped some of the penalties attached to fame. His correspondence, for instance, has grown burdensome, a burden which, it may be presumed it is not altogether unpleasant to him to bear.

He has been receiving letters of congratulation from earnest democrats from all parts of the state; letters from white men in those eastern counties overflowing with gratitude and thanks for his kindly appreciation of the dangers with which they are threatened by a return to the (to them) ruinous system of county government from which they have so fortunately escaped, and his earnest determination to stand by them in warding off these dangers; and especially letters of inquiry from young republicans from all over the western part of the state, who like him have grown up republicans from association rather than reflection, declaring their determination, on being convinced of the truth of his card, to ally themselves, as he has done, with the white people of the state in the democratic party. Many of these last named letters inquire of Mr. Robbins whether he had really been a republican, and really wrote the card, whether the card tells the truth, or is only a document he got up for the democrats, and other like questions, the writers of them professing to await only his answer confirming his card, before committing themselves to follow his lead.

John P. Robbins Jr. has not only won distinction for himself by the publication of his card, but has rendered an important service to the democratic party. The writer does not know that Mr. Robbins has any political aspirations, and would be slow to advise any young man to

enter on a political life. But while a political career is full of uncertainties and surprises it is evident that Mr. Robbins' card, and the circumstances connected with it, open the way before him for a probably successful one, if he seeks to avail himself of it. He has the advantage too, as a politician, of being a self-made man. And our people are prone to make darlings of self-made men.

Even those bright but erratic geniuses, Greene and Linney, have been consigned by them only to a political purgatory, from which, after a moderate punishment, they may hope release, for offenses for which the same people would have committed most of our public men to political sheol. Much stranger things have happened in politics than for both of them to be found after a while safe at home again in the democratic party returned prodigals, their tail feathers somewhat soiled and dragged, but their length and strength of wing increased by their long and stormy flight from it.

Shull's Mill N. C.  
Aug. 7th. 1888.

## The President's Letter.

Whenever Grover Cleveland speaks he speaks clearly, honestly, conscientiously and consistently. His career has been extraordinary. His is a notable example of the possibilities of American citizenship. Born poor, he managed to study law, and at first became sheriff of his county. After some years, although not an active politician, his independent manhood led him to be chosen mayor of a city that had a Republican majority.

So upright and thorough going was his administration that, before his term had expired, he was elected Governor of the State of New York by 198,000 majority. So pure, patriotic and unselfish was his administration as Governor, that before his term was out he was elected President of the United States.

He stands before the American people as a synonym of honesty, integrity and patriotism. He has never been a strong partisan, although always a Democrat. He has never done an act that was for his party rather than for the good of his constituency. It was so when he was sheriff; it was so when he was mayor; it was so when he was Governor, and it has been so while he has been President. His distinctive characteristic is manhood, manhood over and above party; patriotism over and above party; honesty and integrity over and above any demand of astute partisan leaders. It is this that makes the people put their trust in him, for he has never deceived the people in a word that he has ever uttered.—*News-Observer.*

## DOCKERY'S TICKET IN 1884.

At the election in Richmond county in 1884, Oliver H. Dockery, the present Republican candidate for Governor, voted as follows:

To represent the public in the Legislature he voted for Harvey Quick, a negro lawyer, against John W. Sneed, one of the best white farmers of Richmond county.

For Coroner he voted for

Felix Jacobs, a negro man, against Daniel Gay, a one-legged Confederate soldier.

For Register of Deeds, he voted for one N. W. Harlee, a negro man, against Alexander L. McDonald, a white man competent to fill the office and universally esteemed in the county for his courteous bearing.

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Lynchburg	12 40 noon	
Danville	9 47 a m	
Richmond	3 30 p m	
Reidsville	9 02 a m	
Wilmington	7 40 "	
Morehead	11 00 p m	
Goldsboro	4 10 p m	
Raleigh	1 55 p m	
Durham	12 35 p m	
Greensboro	8 00 a m	
Salisbury	6 27 a m	
Salisbury	4 37 a m	
Statesville	3 30 a m	
Newton	2 20 a m	
Hickory	1 56 a m	
Conley Spring	1 30 a m	
Morganton	1 01 a m	
Marion	12 01 night	
Round Knob	11 10 p m	
Black Mt.	10 34 p m	
Asheville	9 15 p m	
Hot Springs	7 50 p m	
Morris town	4 30 p m	
Knoxville	3 05 p m	
Louisville		
Cincinnati		
Chicago		
St. Louis		
Chattanooga	10 00 a m	
Nashville	8 15 p m	
Memphis	10 45 p m	

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